

Stewards' Hearings

The Office of Racing Commissioner (ORC) is entrusted with the statutory duty to maintain the safety and integrity of pari-mutuel horse racing and wagering in the State of Michigan. As part of this mission, the ORC is responsible for regulating the horse racing industry through monitoring, investigating and imposing penalties for violations of the rules.

The stewards are granted the authority to “interpret and enforce the rules of racing and determine all questions pertaining to a racing matter not specifically covered by the rules in *conformity with justice and the best interest of racing*, subject to the authority and orders of the commissioner.” (R 431.1260 (e)) This includes the authority to impose penalties for violation of the rules and conduct hearings to determine the guilt or innocence of licensees.

Types of Steward's Hearings

The following are the two types of hearings the Stewards may convene:

1. Investigative Hearing - is a hearing convened by the Stewards to act as a fact-finding body. The benefit of the investigative hearing is the ability of the Stewards to summon possible witnesses and place them under oath, requiring them to testify truthfully.^{(1 MCL 431.307 (8).)} Information learned during the investigative hearing would then be used to determine if a licensee engaged in conduct that was in violation of the Racing Law or rules promulgated by the Racing Commissioner. Following this hearing and the filing of charges against a licensee, a Due Process Hearing would be held and, if they are found responsible, a penalty imposed.
2. Penalty Hearing – is a hearing held by the Stewards following the determination that a licensee may have engaged in conduct in violation of the Racing Law or rules promulgated by the Racing Commissioner, and a possible sanction or penalty may be imposed. This could be information that was witnessed first-hand by the Stewards during a race or following an investigation into alleged improper conduct.

The Steward's Hearings will be comprised of the following steps.

- Timeliness
- Notice to Charged Party
- Hearing Preparation
- Hearing
- Presentation of the Case
- Deliberation
- Penalty
- Ruling/Decision
- Timing of Penalty Imposition
- Distribution of Reports